

## IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 18, 26, 27, 28 and 29, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please AMEND the claims as indicated below:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A ~~management system for managing network elements, said system comprising:~~  
~~a at least one network element that is managed by said management system;~~  
a gateway managing the network element and receiving fault alarm incidents from the network element;  
~~management processor;~~  
~~at least one distributed management server that is distributed from said management processor and communicatively coupled to said management processor; and~~  
at least one policy object distributed across the distributed management servers so that each policy object residing on, and is executable by, at least one of said at least one a respective distributed management server, said at least one each policy object defining fault management behavior for managing at least one of said at least one the network element by the gateway, wherein a respective policy object is executed by the distributed management server on which the policy object resides in response to a respective fault alarm incident received by the gateway and associated with the policy object, to thereby implement the fault management behavior defined by the respective policy object in response to the respective fault alarm incident.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system of claim 1 further comprising:~~  
~~at least one gateway communicatively coupled to at least one of said at least one distributed management server and communicatively coupled to at least one of said at least one network element; and~~  
a at least one decision object stored in said at least one the gateway, that at least one the decision object defining decision behavior for routing fault alarm incidents information regarding at least one of said at least one received by the gateway from the network element to an appropriate one of said at least one an appropriate distributed management server for execution of an appropriate one of said at least one a policy object residing on said appropriate distributed management server.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system of claim 2 wherein said~~

decision object is a data path tree associating attributes of ~~said at least one~~the network element with ~~said at least one~~a respective policy object.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system~~ of claim 1 further comprising:

a policy server communicatively coupled to ~~said at least one~~the distributed management ~~servers~~servers, ~~said the~~ policy server storing ~~said at least one~~ policy object objects and operable to distribute ~~said at least one~~the stored policy object objects to ~~said at least one~~the distributed management ~~servers~~servers.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system~~ of claim 4 further comprising:

a policy builder user interface communicatively coupled to ~~said the~~ policy server, ~~said the~~ policy builder user interface operable to receive input from a user for defining policy objects.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system~~ of claim 4 further comprising:

a configuration file communicatively accessible by ~~said the~~ policy server, ~~said the~~ configuration file storing information defining ~~at least one of said at least one~~the distributed management ~~server~~servers to which ~~each of said at least one~~the policy object objects are to reside.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system~~ of claim 1 further comprising:

an alert server ~~communicatively coupled to said management processor wherein said alert server generates~~generating alerts based on fault conditions ~~transmitted by said at least one distributed management system~~ in accordance with ~~said at least one~~ the policy object objects.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system~~ of claim 1 further comprising:

a management information base ~~communicatively coupled to said management processor, said management information base~~ operable to store software objects corresponding to ~~said at least one~~the network element.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system~~ of claim 6, further comprising wherein:

a said-policy builder comprising an interface operable to receive user input defining said information stored to said-the configuration file.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~management system~~ of claim 6 wherein ~~said-the~~ policy server comprises:

logic executable to distribute said-at least-one-the policy object-objects to said-at least one-the distributed management server-servers in accordance with said-the configuration file.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method ~~of managing at network elements of a communication network, said method comprising the steps of:~~

implementing a gateway managing a network element and receiving fault alarm incidents from the network element;

implementing a plurality of distributed management servers-servers that are each distributed from and communicatively coupled to a central management processor; and

communicatively coupling each of said network elements to at least one of said plurality of distributed management servers; and

providing-distributing at least one policy object-objects distributed across the distributed management servers so that each policy object resides on, and executable by, a respective distributed management server, each policy object defining fault management behavior for managing at least one of said-the network elements-element by the gateway, wherein a respective policy object is executed by the distributed management server on which the respective policy object resides in response to a respective fault alarm incident received by the gateway and associated with the respective policy object, to thereby implement the fault management behavior defined by the respective policy object in response to the respective fault alarm incident.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 11 further comprising ~~the steps of:~~

communicatively coupling at least one gateway to said plurality distributed management servers and to at least one of said network elements; and

storing a-at least-one decision object on said at least-one-the gateway, said-the decision object defining decision behavior for routing fault alarm incidents information regarding said-at

~~least one of said~~received by the gateway from the network ~~elements~~element to an ~~appropriate one of said plurality of an appropriate~~ distributed management ~~servers~~server for invoking execution of an ~~appropriate one of and said at least one a~~ respective policy object ~~thereon residing thereon~~.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 12 wherein ~~said the~~ decision object is a data path tree associating attributes of ~~said at least one the~~ network element with ~~said at least one a~~ respective policy object.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 11 further comprising ~~the steps~~ of:

storing ~~said at least one the~~ policy object ~~objects~~ on a policy server communicatively coupled to ~~the said at plurality of distributed management servers~~servers; and

~~said the~~ policy server distributing ~~said at least one the stored~~ policy object ~~objects~~ to an ~~appropriate one or more of said plurality of the distributed management servers~~servers.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 14 further comprising ~~the steps~~ of:

user interacting with a policy builder interface that is communicatively coupled to said policy server for defining ~~said at least one the~~ policy object ~~objects~~.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 14 further comprising ~~the steps~~ of:

determining ~~said appropriate one or more of said plurality of an appropriate~~ distributed management ~~servers~~server of the distributed management servers to which ~~said at least one a~~ respective policy object stored on ~~said the~~ policy server will be distributed, based at least in part on information stored in a configuration file communicatively accessible by ~~said the~~ policy server.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 11 further comprising ~~the steps~~ of:

an alert server ~~communicatively coupled to said central management processor~~ generating an alert ~~an~~ based on a fault condition for ~~at least one of said the~~ network elements element in accordance with ~~said at least one a~~ respective policy object.

18. (CANCELED)

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 16 further comprising ~~the step~~ of:

user inputting said information stored to ~~said the~~ configuration file.

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A system ~~of managing network elements, said system comprising:~~

a plurality of gateways, each gateway managing a network element and receiving fault alarm incidents from the managed network element;

~~a plurality of managed network elements;~~

~~a central management processor means;~~

plurality of software objects, each software object for defining fault management behavior for managing said ~~plurality of a network elements~~ element; and

plurality of distributed management servers ~~processing means distributed from and communicatively coupled to said central management processor means~~ across which the software objects are distributed so that each software object resides on, and is executed by, a respective distributed management server, each of said plurality of software objects residing on at least one of said plurality of distributed processing means for execution thereon wherein a respective software object is executed by the distributed management server on which the respective software object resides in response to a respective fault alarm incident received by a respective gateway and associated with the software object, to thereby implement the fault management behavior defined by the software object in response to the respective fault alarm incident.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 20, wherein each gateway comprises further comprising:

~~means for normalization of data received from said plurality of managed network elements; and~~

logic for routing fault alarm incidents received by the network element managed by the respective gateway to the distributed management servers ~~means for data path selection between said means of data normalization and said plurality of distributed processing means.~~

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 20 further comprising:

means for associating attributes of ~~said plurality of the~~ managed network elements with the distributed management servers~~said plurality of distributed processing means~~ for implementing the ~~defined fault~~ management behavior~~behaviors defined by the software objects~~.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 20 further comprising:  
means for storing the defined management behavior; and  
means for distributing the software objects~~defined management behavior~~ to ~~said means~~  
~~plurality of the distributed processing means~~management servers.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 23 further comprising:  
means for graphically generating the software objects~~defined management behavior~~.

25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 20 further comprising:  
means for generating alerts ~~in accordance with the described management behavior~~.

26. (CANCELED)

27. (CANCELED)

28. (CANCELED)

29. (CANCELED)